



Deputy Under Secretary of Defense

Advanced Systems & Concepts

SUCCESS STORY

JCTD Aids Maritime Awareness and Governance in Gulf of Guinea



Lt. Hamilton Neto Nascimento de Sousa, executive officer, Sao Tome and Principe Coast Guard, oversees coastal surveillance system

A JCTD has helped set up a maritime surveillance system in the African country of Sao Tome and Principe to improve security in Gulf of Guinea, with installation planned for other countries soon.

Piracy and theft are major concerns along the Gulf of Guinea coast and large-scale oil theft in the Niger Delta is also a significant problem. These threats mean loss of resources and unrealized revenues for African nations. In response to specific African requests for assistance, the Regional Maritime Awareness Capability (RMAC) JCTD is helping these nations address their maritime safety and security challenges.

The RMAC JCTD is a coastal surveillance system that uses ground-based radars and sensors and the Automatic Identification System, which allows ships to exchange data, and thus identify and track each other. It also ties into the Maritime Safety and Security Information System, a database tracking ships across the world. RMAC allows participating nations to automatically share maritime information, enabling those nations to build regional maritime awareness and ultimately aid maritime governance.

The JCTD's coastal surveillance system is now operating in Sao Tome and Principe (in red box on map), and already improving its maritime safety. When local fishermen went missing, a long time would pass before rescue personnel were notified. That changed with establishment of the country's Coast Guard and the RMAC system. The Coast Guard gave several radar bouncing units to local fisherman, who placed them on vessel masts. This enables larger ships to detect smaller fishing boats, helping avoid collisions at sea and aids location of boats in trouble.



The RMAC system also will enable the country to increase security for its commercial traffic and allow the country's Coast Guard to detect illegal fishing in their territorial waters. The JCTD's coastal surveillance system will be installed next in Nigeria.

For more information on the JCTD program, visit its website at <http://www.acq.osd.mil/jctd>.

Cleared for open publication, 10 31 08, Office of Security Review, DoD.